

There are a host of bills that I'm working on at this time, addressing issues from oceans and health care to wildlife and foreign affairs.

After much progress during the 110th Congress, I again introduced the Ocean Conservation, Education, and National Strategy for the 21st Century Act, or Oceans-21. This bill, [H.R. 21](#), will create for the first time a national ocean policy. There is currently no law that requires agencies to consider how their actions affect the ocean, a troubling oversight. And we have few mechanisms to ensure the 140 laws and 20 agencies that oversee ocean policy talk to each other. It's time we fix this problem.

Another issue that continues to be a high priority is the Medicare reimbursement problem that has been hurting our doctors and making it hard for Medicare patients to locate care. Due to reimbursement rates that were established years ago, doctors on the Central Coast are paid significantly less than doctors in neighboring counties, meaning it's very hard to draw new practitioners to our area. We've had some important movement on the issue this year, including a meeting with House and Senate staffers in April. I am preparing to introduce legislation to fix this problem, which will hopefully be incorporated into a comprehensive health care reform bill later this year.

I have also introduced legislation related to the Peace Corps, an agency vital to our national security and an important service outlet for thousands of individuals. Peace Corps, dollar-for-dollar, is the most effective diplomatic tool at our disposal, yet the program has been underfunded for many years. The Peace Corps Expansion Act, which was introduced in February and which has more than 100 cosponsors, would double the Peace Corps budget within three years, allowing 16,000 volunteers to be in field at any given time. President Obama supported the effort to double the Peace Corps during his campaign, a goal that [H.R. 1066](#) would accomplish. The chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee also supports this bill and will work toward its passage or inclusion in the State Department Authorization bill planned for later this year.

There are a variety of additional topics on which I have either introduced legislation or plan to soon. One bill that will be introduced this summer is designed to regulate the abusive treatment of dogs in puppy mills. We must not allow this sort of treatment of animals, and this bill will ensure that unregulated breeders treat their animals humanely. Another bill is aimed at preventing cruise ships from dumping waste water where it could harm important ocean ecosystems. This is just a taste of the many issues that will continue to be high priorities during

the 111th Congress.

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